



Public Health Committee

February 27, 2013

HB 5538 AAC a Pilot Program for School-based Health Care Centers

Testimony of Mary Anne O'Neill

The Connecticut Community Providers Association is pleased to submit testimony in support of House Bill 5538, AAC a Pilot Program for School-based Health Care Centers. CCPA represents community-based nonprofit organizations who serve children, adults and families who are experiencing mental health or substance use disorders, as well as providers who serve those with intellectual and other disabilities. Our provider members are the heart of the safety net.

House Bill 5538 would establish a pilot program to develop best practices to integrate school-based health care centers with school and community health care providers. CCPA strongly supports expanding school-based health services and encouraging direct collaboration between schools and community providers to improve identification of children and adolescents who have signs and symptoms of behavioral health issues. Once students with behavioral health issues have been identified, they can then be linked to mental health services that are in partnership with community-based child guidance clinics. This will assure that these children and their families are tied to a community system of care, and would build upon the current system of enhanced care clinics, child guidance clinics, and behavioral health emergency response systems funded by DMHAS and DCF.

We also support strengthening services to young people between 16 and 25 years of age, which is when serious mental illness often manifests itself, and substance use increases. Such services must be broadly available.

CCPA appreciates the opportunity to comment on HB 5538 and the important issues underlying this proposal.

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